ROCKY MOUNTAIN COORDINATING GROUP

Bureau of Indian Affairs (Southwest, Rocky Mountain and Great Plains Regions)
Bureau of Land Management (Colorado and Wyoming)
Fish and Wildlife Service (Mountain-Prairie Region)
Forest Service (Rocky Mountain Region)
National Park Service (Intermountain and Midwest Regions)
State Agencies in Colorado, Wyoming, South Dakota, Nebraska and Kansas

June 23, 2013

To: Rocky Mountain Area Multi-Agency Coordinating Group and Local Multi-
           Agency Coordinating Groups

From: Chair, Rocky Mountain Coordinating Group

Subject: **Initial Attack Strategy Guidance for Local Area Multi-Agency
           Coordination Groups (LMAC) – Planning Level 4 and 5**

The Rocky Mountain Geographic Area (RMA) is currently experiencing a very high level
of fire activity. On June 20th, the RMA went from a Preparedness Level (PL) of 3 to a PL-
4. A Geographic level Multi-Agency Coordinating (MAC) Group has been established as
per our Mobilization Guide requirements. Dispatch Zone Local Multi-Agency
Coordination (LMAC) Groups should already be meeting to review and use processes for
prioritizing firefighting resources within your areas.

Initial Attack capability remains a very high priority for the Geographic Area MAC right
below safety of firefighters and the public. Attached to this letter is direction from the
RMCG to LMACs regarding our expectations for maintaining critical initial attack
capabilities within each Dispatch Zone for the remainder of this high fire activity level.

Questions may be addressed by Rocky Mountain Coordination Group Dispatch Zone
Liaisons; Rocky Mountain Coordinating Group Chair, Ken Kerr (303-957-8802); or RMA
MAC Coordinator at (303-445-4329).

Sincerely,

/s/ Kenneth R. Kerr

Kenneth R. Kerr
Chairperson, Rocky Mountain Coordinating Group

CC: RMCG Representatives
      RMCG Business Manager
      RMCG Committee Chairs
      RMA Dispatch Center Managers

Attachment: RMCG Initial Attack Strategy Guidance for LMACs (2pp)

Rocky Mountain Coordinating Group (RMCG)
Initial Attack Strategy Guidance for Local Area Multi-Agency Coordination Groups (LMAC)

June 23, 2013

Background

The Rocky Mountain Area (RMA) went to PL 4 as on June 20, 2013. Initial attack (IA) across the Geographic Area (GA) is increasing with multiple Incident Management Teams (IMTs) assigned at Type 3, 2, 1 complexity levels. There appears to be momentum for the level of IA activity to increase stressing Geographic Area and National resources.

Issue

The Rocky Mountain Coordinating Group (RMCG) and Rocky Mountain Area Multi-Agency Coordinating (RMA MAC) Group are interested in a establishing a strategy to maintain initial attack (IA) capability and to assure fluid management of constrained IA resources within and among dispatch zones. This strategy will be in conjunction with IA responsibility delegated to assigned IMTs within the RMA.

There are a finite number of Type 1 Interagency Hotshot Crews (IHCs), Type 2 IA crews, engines, and tactical aircraft within the RMA, thus strategic management of these resources is required to meet IA and incident needs. The Type 2 IA crew transportation capability is variable and must be taken into consideration as well.

Rocky Mountain Coordinating Group Considerations

- What is a Zone's and or the GA's initial attack capability? Have supplemental resources been engaged?

- Why is investing IA resources into a particular incident a sound decision?   Is this commitment a temporary tasking or full commitment to the incident? Is this supported by incident management action points (MAPs)?

- Can certain IA resources operate from a pool, module or task force and be assigned to priority missions on multiple incidents, instead of working on just one incident for the duration of that incident? E.g., RMA or dispatch zone task forces for structure protection.

- Where is the next threat of increased fire activity likely to occur and what resources are needed to preposition for the threat?

- RMA will ramp up with additional staffing as per the draw down level in the Rocky Mountain Area Interagency Mobilization Guide as well as space needs including potential for establishing mobilization centers for supporting IA crews

- What are sources of funding for prepositioning of resources? E.g., agency severity requests that have been coordinated with partners, unit-level or dispatch zone support codes, etc.

Scenarios That Will Ensure IA Capability

RMCG expectations for LMACs are:

- Dispatch Zones must meet staffing requirements for IA from agency unit staffing and/or supplemented by severity requests or support codes. Additionally, a dispatch zone may use an IMT assigned within the dispatch zone to assist with IA capability.

- The LMAC may use one or more of the following alternatives to assist with IA capability:

    o IMTs are tasked with both incident and IA responsibilities for a defined geographic area within a zone.

    o IMTs are tasked with incident and not with IA but are responsible to provide resources as determined and identified as ready reserve. Those resources are identified in the IAP for dispatch within the zone or GA. IA is retained by agency unit in zone.

RMCG Intent to RMA MAC and LMACs

- Aggressive initial attack while always providing for safety is still the best way to effectively prevent large, costly, and dangerous wildfire.

- Decisions must reflect the goal of using available IA resources to manage the fire situation in the most effective, efficient, and safest means possible over the season.

- Key to success will be priority setting and allocating the IA resource to maintain capability in zones, prepositioned resource and for periods of engagement in extended attack until relieved based on interagency RMA MAC priority and allocation decisions.

- Within these priorities, asset/resource mobilization, turnaround times and potential effectiveness will also be factored into allocation with IMT. IA assets may be diverted to higher priority incidents. It is important that initial attack incident commanders provide as much accurate information as available to facilitate rapid assessment and decisions on priorities.

- RMA MAC and LMACs must commit to making decisions on prioritization and preposition of IA resources with full utilization of Predictive Services tools including the Wildland Fire Decision Support System (WFDSS), intelligence analysis, and predictive services to evaluate potential values at risk and the probability of success. WFDSS Risk assessment processes and associated products are required to add clarification in determining resource allocation. RMA MAC will use those products to assist in determining geographic area allocation prioritization.

- Allocating IA resources to projected long-duration fires or those that have minimal probability of early containment will be based on planning efforts that include prioritized management action points (MAP). Processes will be in place to mobilize or demobilize resources as MAP critical thresholds or trigger points are approached or objectives are met.

- As determined in established processes within mobilization guides or plan, the agency, LMACs or RMA MAC will centralize management and control of critical IA resources or assets. Resources may be organized in a module or task force concept with the goal of accomplishing priority MAPs, interagency objectives on multiple fires and returning forces to IA responsibility.

- The RMA MAC maintains the authority and responsibility to adjust asset/resource allocations to an LMAC/dispatch zone based on high priority needs in other LMAC/dispatch zones. The RMA MAC will make every effort to carefully coordinate these adjustments.